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U.S. HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES
PERMANENT SELECT COMMITTEE ON INTELLIGENCE
SUBCOMMITTEE ON TERRORISM AND HOMELAND SECURITY

September 25, 2001

The Honorable Norman Y. Mineta
The Secretary of Transportation
U.S. Department of Transportation
400 7th Street, SW
Washington, DC 20590

Dear Secretary Mineta:

During the national crisis that we faced this month, the government made the necessary, unavoidable, and prudent decision to ground commercial aircraft and enact strict new safety standards for air travel. Air travel has become a common practice; it has become part of the American way of life. However, with the majority of the citizens of the United States still fearful of the September 11th terrorist attacks, the airline industry and the FAA face a daunting task in restoring the public's confidence in airline security. We want to make sure that the FAA is taking all of the necessary steps to ensure that confidence is restored.

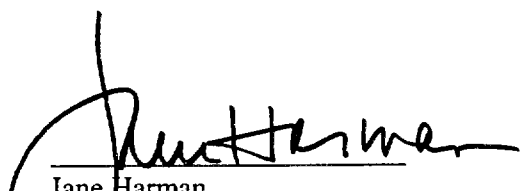
As you know, the FAA ordered airports and airlines to implement new criminal checks and scrutinize employment histories for baggage handlers, food service workers and other employees who have access to airliners, ramps, tarmacs and other secure areas. They also increased security in and around all airport concourses. However, today a Tennessee man with a handgun in his pocket allegedly walked through a metal detector at Hartsfield International Airport undetected, despite the increased security there. We understand that this may be an isolated incident, but in light of recent events, it appears to have been a very serious breach of security that threatens to complicate the tough job you and we face restoring public confidence in the airlines.

In recent testimony before the Senate Committee on Government Affairs, the GAO reported that airport screeners do not perform well in detecting dangerous objects. Also, FAA tests showed that as testing gets more realistic-that is, as tests more closely approximate how a terrorist might attempt to penetrate a checkpoint- screener performance declines significantly. It is imperative that we eliminate any lapses in airport security and restore the public's confidence in our aviation industry as quickly as humanly possible.

Surely, as we continue to heal as a nation, there will be much debate and review on how this tragic act of terrorism ever could have happened. There are several security areas that deserve immediate attention and review. Airport and airline inspections are not the least of these. We ask for your assurance that all necessary and appropriate steps are being taken to assure the security of our aviation system. Thank you for your tireless efforts in securing our transportation infrastructure and for your leadership.

Sincerely,


Saxby Chambliss
Chairman


Jane Harman
Ranking Democrat

*Norm
you are doing great
work under tremendous
pressure. Keep it up.
CJ*

*California is
proud of you.
Fried!*